

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MARCH 1 HIRC STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOROCCO
AND U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE

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1. FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT GIVEN BY DEP ASST SECRETARY
NICHOLAS A. VELIOTES BEFORE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEES ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
(FRASER) AND ON AFRICA (DIGGS) ON MARCH 1, 1978.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

QUOTE: MR. CHAIRMAN, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO AP-
PEAR BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA TO DISCUSS THE CIRCUMSTANCES

AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS, THAT GOVERN OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN MOROCCO. OUR INTERESTS IN MOROCCO ARE LONG-STANDING AND SIGNIFICANT, BOTH IN A BILATERAL CONTEXT AND WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR POLICIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE IN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES BE IN FULL ACCORD ON THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THIS STRATEGICALLY-PLACED NATION.

AS YOUR COMMITTEES ARE AWARE, THE BROAD SPAN OF OUR INTER-

ESTS IN MOROCCO RESTS ON A LONG HISTORY OF FRIENDLY COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE. WHEN IT WAS IMPORTANT TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, KING HASSAN'S FATHER ALLOWED THE U.S. TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN AIR BASES CONSTRUCTED IN MOROCCO IN THE LATTER YEARS OF THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE. ALTHOUGH OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IS NOW MUCH REDUCED, THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT HAS ENDORSED IN PRINCIPLE THE LOCATION OF AN AMERICAN SPACETRACKING STATION ON ITS TERRITORY. VESSELS OF THE SIXTH FLEET HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WELCOME IN MOROCCAN PORTS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF KING HASSAN HAS TAKEN A FIRM STAND
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AGAINST TERRORISM AND HAS ADHERED TO THE THREE ANTI-TERRORISM CONVENTIONS. MOROCCAN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE ACTIVELY COOPERATED IN INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS FOR EFFECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST HIJACKING AND OTHER TERRORIST CRIMES. INDEED, IN MANY INTERNATIONAL GATHERINGS WE FIND THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT TAKING POSITIONS THAT ARE CONGRUENT WITH OURS, EVEN THOUGH THOSE POSITIONS MAY NOT BE POPULAR WITH OTHER THIRD WORLD MEMBERS. MOROCCO HAS A POSITIVE RECORD OF SUPPORT FOR POSITIONS FAVORED BY THE U.S. AT THE UN.

ON REGIONAL QUESTIONS, KING HASSAN HAS LONG BEEN AN ADVOCATE OF A MODERATE AND REASONABLE SETTLEMENT FOR THE ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE. HE HAS GIVEN CRITICAL SUPPORT TO OUR MIDDLE EAST PEACE INITIATIVES. HIS PROMPT AND PUBLIC BACKING FOR PRESIDENT SADAT'S TALKS IN JERUSALEM GAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPETUS TO THAT INITIATIVE. MOROCCO ALSO HAS BEEN A FORCE FOR MODERATION IN THE AFRICA CONTEXT.

OUR ECONOMIC STAKE IN MOROCCO IS GROWING AS ITS ECONOMY BUILDS STRENGTH. U.S. FIRMS ARE NOW BEGINNING TO OBTAIN MAJOR CONTRACTS WITH MOROCCAN TRADING PARTNERS.

OUR MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS HAS BEEN SUPPORTED ON THE U.S. SIDE BY A GENERALLY POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. WE HAVE BEEN LIBERAL IN OUR MATERIAL AID AND OUR INVESTMENT HAS PAID OFF IN MOROCCO'S STEADILY IMPROV-

ING ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE. PARTLY AS A RESULT OF U.S. AID OF NEARLY ONE BILLION DOLLARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1956, MOROCCO HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENT GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION OF ITS ECONOMY AND HAS MOVED INTO THE RANKS OF MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES. UNDER OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHICH BEGAN IN 1960 WE HAVE PROVIDED REASONABLE AMOUNTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING. SINCE 1973 THIS ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN FOCUSSED ON A SPECIFICALLY-DEFINED PROGRAM TO MODERNIZE MOROCCAN FORCES AND IMPROVE UNCLASSIFIED

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THEIR CAPABILITIES FOR DEFENSE AND DETERRENCE.

FOR THE FORTHCOMING FISCAL YEAR (FY 1979), WE ARE PROJECTING A CONTINUATION OF OUR ASSISTANCE FOR THIS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AND HAVE PROPOSED 45 MILLION DOLLARS FOR FMS LOAN GUARANTIES, THE SAME FIGURE AUTHORIZED FOR THE CURRENT YEAR. WE PROPOSE AN INCREASE IN OUR TRAINING PROGRAM FROM 1.3 TO 1.5 MILLION DOLLARS. A MAJOR PORTION OF THE PROJECTED FINANCING IS CURRENTLY EXPECTED TO BE USED FOR THE COMPONENTS OF AN AIR DEFENSE RADAR SYSTEM. OTHER FUNDS WILL BE USED TO PROVIDE BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING VEHICLES AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, TO BOLSTER MOROCCAN DEFENSES.

IN DEVELOPING OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROPOSALS, WE HAVE PAID CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOROCCO. THE NATION HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN VERY TOLERANT IN ITS ATTITUDES TOWARDS JEWS AND OTHER MINORITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, POLITICAL FREEDOMS HAVE BEEN ABRIDGED IN THE PAST. AS NOTED IN OUR JANUARY 31 REPORT TO CONGRESS, WE BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS DURING THE PAST YEAR. DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED WITH THE LIFTING OF PRESS CENSORSHIP AND THE COMPLETION OF PHASED NATIONAL ELECTIONS FOR A NEW PARLIAMENT. THE NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED IN OCTOBER 1977 INCLUDES LEADERS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES. THE NUMBER OF LENGTHY DETENTIONS WITHOUT TRIAL HAS BEEN CUT; 178 PRISONERS, THE LAST MAJOR GROUP BEING HELD ON CHARGES OF EARLIER CRIMES AGAINST THE STATE, WERE TRIED AND SENTENCED IN EARLY 1977. SOME OF THESE PRISONERS REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN MISTREATED IN PRIOR YEARS DURING THEIR DETENTION. WE DO NOT HAVE EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS ANY CONTINUING PATTERN OF ABUSE. UNCLASSIFIED

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THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT TRAINING OR MATERIAL OBTAINED THROUGH OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS BEING USED IN MOROCCO TO ASSIST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PROJECTED FMS PURCHASES OR U.S. TRAINING COULD READILY BE DIVERTED FOR THESE PURPOSES BY LAW EN-

FORCEMENT AGENCIES.

IN OUR JUDGMENT, MOROCCA CAN GO FURTHER TO IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. WE BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT IS CLEARLY HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT IN THE REPORTS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS. WE HAVE INTENSIFIED OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE WITH HIGH-LEVEL MOROCCANS BOTH HERE AND IN RABAT DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS, POINTING OUT THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO CONTINUED PROGRESS IN ALL AREAS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE. IN THIS RESPECT, WE WERE

ENCOURAGED BY THE AMNESTY OF SOME 40 PRISONERS SENTENCED FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE STATE AND THE RELEASE OF 20 DETAINEES IN LATE 1977.

WE HAVE ALSO CONSULTED CLOSELY WITH YOU CONCERNING MOROCCAN USE OF U.S.-PROVIDED EQUIPMENT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA, WHERE MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ARE WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED AS ADMINISTRATORS BUT ARE NOT GENERALLY RECOGNIZED AS SOVEREIGN, AND WHERE POLISARIO GUERRILLAS HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FROM BASES IN ALGERIA AND SEEKING RECOGNITION FOR A GOVERNMENT IN EXILE ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION HAS BEEN DENIED.

THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN UNDER INTENSIVE EXAMINATION WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH SINCE MY LAST APPEARANCE HERE IN OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR. AS WE HAVE INFORMED YOU, SUBSEQUENT TO MY TESTIMONY, SENIOR MOROCCAN REPRESENTATIVES MADE CLEAR TO US THAT THEY PLANNED TO USE IN THE SAHARA A NUMBER OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE MILITARY ITEMS THEY PROPOSED TO BUY FROM US. INCLUDED ON THEIR LIST OF PURCHASES WERE AIRCRAFT AND GROUND EQUIPMENT.

IN OUR REVIEW OF THE MOROCCAN REQUEST, WE HAVE HAD TO ASK THE QUESTION WHETHER THE SALE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN THE SAHARA WOULD IMPINGE ON THE RIGHT OF THE SAHARANS TO SELF-DETERMINATION. AS YOU WILL RECALL FROM THE HEARINGS LAST FALL, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONFLICTING CONSIDERATIONS THAT BEAR ON THIS ISSUE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- A COHERENT PRO-INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT EXISTED IN THE SAHARA PRIOR TO SPANISH WITHDRAWAL IN 1975-76;

-- THE MOROCCAN MILITARY FORCES ENCOUNTERED RESISTANCE IN THEIR OCCUPATION OF THE TERRITORY;

-- MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA CLAIMED THAT THEIR ANNEXATION OF THE TERRITORY WAS LEGITIMATED THROUGH THE FEBRUARY 26,

1976 MEETING OF JEMA'A MEMBERS AND THROUGH PARTICIPATION
OF SAHARAN INHABITANTS IN LATER NATIONAL ELECTIONS;

-- THE POSITION OF MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA HAS NOT BEEN AC-
CEPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS OR BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF
ITS MEMBERS;

-- IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE POLISARIO
FRONT ACTUALLY REPRESENTS THE LARGE NUMBER OF INHABITANTS
OF THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA IT CLAIMS, BECAUSE ACCESS TO
REFUGEE CAMPS HAS BEEN DENIED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF INTER-

NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE POLISARIO'S
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REFUGEE FIGURES EXCEED THE TOTAL SAHARA POPULATION IDEN-
TIFIED BY SPANISH CENSUS IN 1974;

-- SOME OF THE REFUGEES WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE THE CAMPS TO
RETURN TO THEIR HOMES, BUT HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN PREVENTED
FROM DOING SO;

-- THE POLISARIO MOVEMENT IS RECEIVING FUNDS, ARMS, AND
TRAINING FROM FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND PROBABLY INCLUDES A
NUMBER OF NON-SAHARANS AMONG ITS FIGHTING FORCES;

-- WITH A POPULATION OF 74,000 (ACCORDING TO THE SPANISH
CENSUS OF 1974), THE TERRITORY COULD NOT EASILY BECOME A
VIALE, INDEPENDENT STATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY;

-- AS LONG AS THE GUERRILLA WARFARE CONTINUES, IT IS
PROBABLY NOT POSSIBLE TO CONDUCT AN ACT OF SELF-DETERMINA-
TION WHICH WOULD GENERALLY BE ACCEPTED AS FAIR AND
ACCURATE.

IF WE WERE TO PROCEED WITH THE SALE OF EQUIPMENT FOR USE
IN THE SAHARA, WE WOULD NEED TO AMEND THE 1960 BILATERAL
SECURITY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT. THAT AGREEMENT LIMITS THE
USE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. TO THE
DEFENSE AND SECURITY OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, AND THERE-
FORE DOES NOT, IN OUR VIEW, COVER SUCH USE IN THE SAHARA,
WHERE WE RECOGNIZE ONLY MOROCCO'S ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY.
FOR THE SAME REASONS, THE AGREEMENT WOULD ALSO NEED AMEND-
MENT FOR MOROCCAN USE OF U.S. EQUIPMENT IN MAURITANIA,
WHERE THE MOROCCAN MILITARY HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM 2500
TO 6000 TROOPS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS PURSUANT TO A
MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY NEGOTIATED BY THE TWO COUNTRIES LAST
SUMMER.

THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS, OF WHICH YOU ARE AWARE, THAT
MOROCCO HAS USED SOME ITEMS OF U.S. EQUIPMENT IN THE SAHARA.
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SOME OF THIS EQUIPMENT WAS PROVIDED THROUGH THE FMS AND EARLIER GRANT PROGRAM, AND IN OUR VIEW IS SUBJECT TO THE USE LIMITATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT OF MOROCCO MAY HAVE ASSUMED THAT IT WAS ENTITLED TO USE THIS EQUIPMENT IN DEFENSE OF THE TERRITORY THAT IT ADMINISTERS AND THAT IT CONSIDERS MOROCCO. WE HAVE HAD A RECENT OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF MOROCCO THE USE LIMITATIONS OF OUR 1960 AGREEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MOROCCO IS NOW AWARE OF OUR VIEW THAT THE CURRENT AGREED USES PERTAIN ONLY TO THE DEFENSE AND SECURITY OF THE TERRITORY WE RECOGNIZE AS BELONGING TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO.

WE HAVE TWO CLOSELY-RELATED QUESTIONS: THE PENDING REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT AND THE REPORTS OF MOROCCAN USE OF U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT IN THE SAHARA. WE BELIEVE THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TOGETHER AND ARE PREPARING TO DO SO, CHECKING ON REPORTS AND EVALUATING THE SITUATION. WE REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT ON THESE ISSUES. AS YET, FINAL DECISIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TAKEN. WE BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOUR VIEWS BE FACTORED INTO THIS PROCESS AND THEREFORE HAVE CONSULTED WIDELY AND FREQUENTLY WITH MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES. WE EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO SEEK YOUR VIEWS.

ONE NEW AND ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT IN THE SITUATION IS THE PROSPECT THAT THE LONG-DELAYED SUMMIT MEETING OF THE OAU ON THE SAHARAN ISSUE MAY BE HELD IN LIBREVILLE IN LATE MARCH. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO PRECISE FORMULAS, WE WOULD CERTAINLY HOPE THAT AFRICAN-DESIGNED PEACEKEEPING AND MEDIATION MACHINERY WILL EMERGE FROM THE CONFERENCE. UNQUOTE. END TEXT. VANCE

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